

Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting
May 19, 2022
Approved Minutes

Members Present: Joann Willis Lindholm, Chair; Kelvin Harris, Vice Chair; Peggy Fields, Secretary; Christy Crowther; Samantha Gregory; Eric Raff; Matthew Shapiro, Clay Huie, Paige Moore, Kevin Kozoil

Members Present by Conference Call: None

Guests:

Robin Ramsey, Director, F.R.E.E.
Tracy Meador, Operations Manager, F.R.E.E.
John Naples, Manager, CATS
Dale Batten; Deputy Commissioner, DARS

Staff Present:

Barclay Shepard, Manager, VATS
Elin Glass, VATS
Sonja Schaible, VATS
Emily McKeough, VATS
Paula Martin, VATS

Interpreters Heather Paradise and Katherine Malady

Call to Order:

Joann Lindholm, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Ms. Lindholm stated that this meeting was focused on “Catching Up”.

Welcome New ATAC Members:

Joann Lindholm welcomed the following new ATAC members:

- Paige Moore (At-Large member)
- Samantha Gregory (mandated State Education Agency representative)

Approval of Minutes:

The November 21, 2019, minutes were approved as written.

Public Comment:

There were no comments from the public.

Old Business:

No report

New Business:

VATS Program Updates:

Mr. Shepard provided the following general program updates to include:

- Reviewed the history of the AT Act to include VATS mission, state level and state leadership activities and AT Advisory Council (ATAC) membership purpose and requirements.
- Summary of VATS FFY21 Annual Progress Report and three-year data comparison.
- Discussed federal funding levels for FY22 and potential AT Act reauthorization under the 21st Century Assistive Technology Act.
- Discussed collaborative partnerships with DARS vocational rehabilitation (VR) program, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), and Sheltering Arms Institute (SAI).
- Reviewed VATS partnership with Virginia No Wrong Door (NWD) to include programs established with federal stimulus funding from NWD through the CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act.

Sonja Schaible, AT Acquisition & Aging Coordinator, provided an overview of activities to include:

- Social Health Kit overview (all kit devices are on display and VATS staff available at lunch to answer questions and provide demonstration of these devices)
- Temporary Ramps Program update - New ramps product purchased for RE engineers and H.E.L.P. (Health Equipment Loan Program) to assist with providing this service to the Shenandoah Valley area including Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC) and the Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS)-local area agency on aging.
- Update on the progress of a Memorandum of Agreement among F.R.E.E., VATS, DVEM. with FREE and VDEM to address durable medical equipment needs for Virginians during natural disasters.
- Virtual AT device trainings have been ongoing during the pandemic and in-person trainings being scheduled again.

Emily McKeough, AT Access Coordinator, provided an overview of activities to include:

- Collaboration with ADA Coordinators with the Department of Corrections to meet AT needs of offenders with disabilities accessing training and education programs while incarcerated.
- Reviewed Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Kits and distribution of these kits across the state
- Collaborated with DARS VR program to provide seven “Time Management” to address executive function needs of students with disabilities.
- Collaborated with DARS VR program to provide multiple “College Prep” training program to address the needs DARS students transitioning from secondary to post-secondary education.
- Reported on a successful collaboration with CATS to provide stroller to school in northern Virginia.

Paula Martin, NWD Public Health Workforce AT Specialist, provided an overview of activities to include:

- Reported on the successful completion of the Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities grant (CPID). Many successful strategies from this grant were infused in the VR program as well as the new DARS Pathways grant.
- Reported on VATS collaborative activities with Sheltering Arms Institute.
- Discussed the NWD partnership and provided a demonstration of the Emergency and Social Health Kits during the Working Lunch.
- Reviewed services provided regarding AT and vaccine access.
- Reported on Information and Assistance activities.
- Discussed successful partnerships with AAAs to demonstrate therapeutic robotic pets to encourage social inclusion and reduce anxiety.
- Provided multiple success stories to include augmentative and alternative communication devices and therapeutic pets.

Electronic Meeting Discussion:

Mr. Shepard discussed the Commonwealth's Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) meeting requirements as they relate to electronic meetings. ATAC members discussed advantages and challenges of electronic meetings. Mr. Shepard reported that new FIOA policy requirements go into effect on September 1, 2022. Per ATAC request, VATS will explore new electronic meeting options and potentially vote on adopting an electronic meeting policy at the next ATAC meeting.

VATS State Plan:

Mr. Shepard reported that VATS three-year State Plan (FY22-24) is due on July 1, 2022. Mr. Shepard reported that the template for the State Plan changed recently, streamlining the process. VATS staff have completed State Plan and will send to the Lead Agency / DARS Commissioner's Office for certification.

Working Lunch: No Wrong Door Emergency Preparedness and Social Health Kit Demos

VATS staff provided demonstrations of equipment available in the Emergency Preparedness and Social Health Kits. Equipment was available for council members to demo and/or ask questions.

VATS Contractor Updates:

Robin Ramsey from the Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (F.R.E.E.) provided a program update to include updates from full-service reuse sites. Highlights included:

- F.R.E.E. has 6 full service durable medical equipment (DME) reuse locations and 12 loan closets.
- Discussed collaboration efforts with VATS and VDEM to meet the needs of individuals during natural disasters.
- Discussed efforts to help other states (Texas, Florida, New Mexico) meet the DME equipment needs of citizens during several different natural disasters.
- Coordinated efforts and provided DME to Virginia military bases to meet the equipment needs of Afghan refugees fleeing their country in September 2021.
- Discussed aluminum shortages and efforts to supply hospitals with gently used DME in order for patients to be discharged home with vital rehabilitation equipment.

- Provided COVID-19 vaccine clinics with wheelchairs in order for citizens to access vaccination sites.

John Naples from Children's Assistive Technology Service (CATS) provided an update on CATS to include the following:

- Reviewed FY21 data to include reuse equipment and communication device loans.
- Discussed FY21 CATS community survey results.
- Morton "Timp" Hecht is the new executive director of CATS.
- Reported on several videos available on YouTube and Buzz4Good highlighting CATS services.
- Collaboration with several Virginia-based physical and occupational therapy programs.
- Funding for a HubScrub unit at the CATS-Roanoke location to improve equipment sanitization.
- Successful fundraisers to include "Hallow Wheels"

ATAC Member Updates:

Several ATAC members reported updates from their organizations or constituent groups. Below is a list of some of those reports that were significant to ATAC:

- Samantha Gregory reported on several Department of Education projects to include new assessment / teaching tools.
- Kevin Kozoil reported plans to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Centers for Independent Living.
- Peggy Fields reported that DBVI celebrated its 100-year Anniversary and discussed the history of the Commission for the Blind (1921) that eventually became the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired. Ms. Fields also reported that she will be retiring later this year.
- Clay Huie discussed updates from WWRC to include a new sensory room, outpatient evaluations, and transitioning to a semester system.
- Christy Crowther reported that ATLFA currently has a loan portfolio of more than \$3 million in direct loans. Ms. Crowther reported that the default loan rate for FY22 was .39%.

Next ATAC Meeting:

The next ATAC Meeting:

- **Thursday, November 17, 2022 (10:00am-2:30pm)**

*Meetings will be held at the DARS Central Office, 8004 Franklin Farms Drive, Richmond, VA. 23229

Adjournment:

A motion was made to adjourn and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm